

CODE OF CONDUCT¹

The accreditation process is by nature, sensitive; objectivity and credibility are essential. The purpose of NCATE's Code of Conduct is to prevent both real and apparent conflicts of interest and/or unethical behavior by NCATE representatives, including staff.

NCATE board members, program reviewers, and staff shall conduct themselves at all times while representing NCATE as thoughtful, competent, well prepared, and impartial professionals.

To assure institutions and the public that NCATE reviews are impartial and objective, to avoid conflicts of interest, and to promote equity and high ethical standards in the accreditation system, board members, program reviewers and staff shall follow the *Code of Conduct*. They should exclude themselves from NCATE activities for any other reasons not listed in the Code which may represent an actual or perceived conflict of interest. Violation of any part of the Code will result in the board member's removal from the board. Program Reviewers and staff members will also be subject to disciplinary action, including dismissal.

("Board members" as referred to in the Code includes members of the Board of Examiners, Unit Accreditation Board, Specialty Area Studies Board, State Partnership Board, Executive Board, Appeals Board, and committees thereof, unless otherwise specified.)

BIAS

Board members, program reviewers and staff shall:

1. not advance either personal agendas or non-NCATE-approved agendas in the conduct of accreditation reviews by attempting to apply personal or partisan interpretations of standards.
2. examine the facts as they exist and not be influenced by past reputation, media accounts, etc., about institutions or programs being reviewed
3. exclude themselves from participating in NCATE activities if, to their knowledge, there is some predisposing factor that could prejudice them with respect to the accreditation of institutions, partnerships with states, or approval of a professional organization's guidelines.

¹ This document was influenced by the "Principles, Protocols and Etiquette for the NASM Accrediting Commission" of the National Association of Schools of Music, September 1998. This document was amended and approved by NCATE's Executive Board on October 27, 2003.

4. exclude themselves from NCATE activities if “they are philosophically opposed to or are on record as having made generic criticism about a specific type of institution or program allowable under the standards.”²

COMPENSATION/GIFTS

1. Board of Examiners (BOE) members shall not request or accept any compensation whatsoever or any gifts of substance from the institution being reviewed or anyone affiliated with the institution. (Gifts of substance would include briefcases, tickets to athletic or entertainment events. . .)
 - If the giving of small tokens is important to an institution’s culture, BOE members may accept these tokens from the institution. (Tokens might include, for example, coffee mugs, key chains, tee shirts . . .)
 - If unsure, the BOE member should err on the side of declining gifts of any kind.
2. BOE members shall not expect elaborate hospitality during previsits or visits.
 - Institutions are not expected to arrange for dinner for teams, except for the Sunday night dinner with institutional representatives. It is appropriate for institutions to provide snacks and non-alcoholic beverages for teams as they conduct their work on campus and at their hotel. Where options for meals are limited, the BOE team chair shall make arrangements in advance with the institution for team meals.
3. BOE members shall use restraint in any expenditures charged to the campus being visited, and shall abide by the guidelines set forth in NCATE’s Travel Reimbursement Policy.
4. Under no circumstance shall staff accept any personal compensation whatsoever or any gifts of substance from an institution, though institutions may pay for staff travel when they invite staff to their institutions, consistent with the guidelines set forth in NCATE’s travel reimbursement policy. If the institution wishes to compensate for a visit by a staff member, payment should be made to NCATE.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

1. Board members, program reviewers and staff shall not participate in any decision-making capacity if they have a close, active association with an institution, state, or professional organization that is being considered for official action.

² “Principles, Protocols and Etiquette for the NASM Accrediting Commission.” Reston, Virginia: National Association of Schools of Music, September 1998, p.7.

- A “decision-making capacity” includes serving on a BOE team, or Audit Committees of the Unit Accreditation Board, State Partnership Board, Specialty Area Studies Board or Executive Board, considering the accreditation of a professional education unit, the acceptance or renewal of a state partnership, acceptance of specialty area standards, or a relationship with another entity.
 - A “close active association” includes:
 - serving on or have served within the last five years on a statewide decision-making board or committee related to professional educator preparation;
 - having been a member of the faculty or staff or a student at the institution within the past ten years ("student" includes persons having been enrolled in a significant course of study or degree program, or being a graduate of the institution);
 - participating (on an individual basis) in a common consortium or special research relationship;
 - having jointly authored research or literature with a faculty member at that institution
 - having an immediate family member attending or employed by the institution, professional organization, or state;
 - being employed or having been employed by the state in a function related to educator preparation within the last five years;
 - having former graduate advisees or advisors employed by the institution. When supervision of dissertations is involved, personal prejudice is especially difficult to avoid and bias is often assumed.
 - having applied for a position at the institution, professional organization, or state;
 - having been a consultant at the institution within 10 years;
 - having served as a commencement speaker, received an honorary degree from the institution, or otherwise profited or appeared to benefit from service to the institution, professional organization or state.
2. BOE members are not eligible to participate on a team at a given institution if they previously served on an evaluation team for accreditation or state program approval review.
 3. Board members shall leave board meetings when the institution, state or professional organization that employs them is being discussed and when a vote is taken.
 4. NCATE board members shall not serve concurrently on other national teacher education accrediting agencies' boards or committees. Persons serving on boards or committees of other national teacher education accrediting agencies shall be ineligible to serve on NCATE boards or committees.
 5. Board members shall not serve concurrently on the Board of Examiners and an NCATE policy board.

6. Appeals Board members shall not serve on any NCATE board or in any other capacity be connected with NCATE during their tenure on the Appeals Board.
7. Program reviewers for specialty organizations shall not review programs from institutions located in their state. Reviewers who are also members of the BOE shall declare themselves ineligible to serve on a BOE team to an institution whose programs they have reviewed.

CONSULTING

When considering or accepting a personal consulting or similar arrangement with an institution, board members, program reviewers and staff shall:

1. be clear that they are not serving as NCATE's agent, but are providing their own professional expertise for consulting purposes.
2. inform the institution that their advice and recommendations do not guarantee accreditation outcomes.
3. restrict consulting fees, if otherwise allowable, to reimbursement of expenses and/or other reasonable and commonly accepted limits.
4. not solicit consultation arrangements with institutions preparing for accreditation visits.
5. not advertise their status as board members for the purpose of building a consulting clientele.
6. not accept a consulting arrangement at an institution for which the member served on the BOE team or on the UAB for at least two years following the accreditation decision.
7. refrain from voicing an opinion about the institution to other board members.
8. Under no circumstance shall staff accept fees from an institution, though institutions may pay for staff travel when they invite staff to their institutions. If the institution wishes to compensate for a visit by a staff member, payment should be made to NCATE.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Confidentiality is an integral part of the accreditation process. The boards, program reviewers and staff must have access to much sensitive information in order to conduct reviews of professional education units, curriculum guidelines, and state program

approval systems. Board members and on-site review teams must protect the confidentiality of this information. *Confidentiality has no expiration date – it lasts forever.*

1. board members, program reviewers and staff shall treat as confidential all elements of the NCATE accreditation process and information gathered as part of the process -- documents, interviews, discussions, interpretations, and analyses - - related to the review of professional education units, specialty organization standards, national program reviews and state partnership applications.
2. board members, program reviewers and staff shall not discuss in public places the particulars of an on-site accreditation visit or the specifics of any case.
3. BOE members and program reviewers shall not discuss details about an institution related to an accreditation visit with anyone other than BOE team members before, during, or after the visit. Policy board members shall refrain from discussing the specifics of individual cases and decisions regarding programs and states with individuals who are not NCATE board members.